

for further consideration of H.R. 4, the Personal Responsibility Act.

## STATE ROUTE 905—NAFTA'S MISSING LINK

**HON. BOB FILNER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 23, 1995*

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will be interested in testimony I gave today before the Transportation Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations:

Mr. Chairman, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on a project that is critical to the economic success of the North American Free Trade Agreement [NAFTA] and the economic development of not only southern California, but the whole Nation.

When the 103d Congress approved and the President signed NAFTA, we all knew that ensuring the success of the agreement would require that all parties provide the necessary infrastructure to facilitate the flow of trade. I am asking this committee and this Congress to honor this commitment to San Diego.

State Route 905 is the critical missing link in our United States-Mexico border trade and transportation system on the West Coast. The current road serves as the only connection between the Otay Mesa point of entry [POE] in San Diego and the Nation's interstate highway system. State Route 905 is a part of that infrastructure which is needed to accommodate international trade and deserves to be funded and completed.

I am here today to urge you to consider funding this vital link during your upcoming deliberations of transportation projects to be funded during fiscal year 1996.

### DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

There is a critical need for continued Federal funding of "special highway demonstration projects." States undergo a constant struggle to build and maintain their own intrastate roads and bridges. They do not have sufficient funds to single-handedly complete highway projects which supplement the national highway system and which support Federal trade policy—as in our case.

This project will produce benefits far beyond the local region as only 16 percent of trade using this border crossing has a San Diego origin or destination. Every State in the continental United States, Hawaii, Canada, Asia, and the Canal Zone all profit from trade through this point of entry.

The Federal Highway Administration has proposed that this road be a part of the National Highway System—and I am confident that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will include this in its list of authorized projects.

### LOCAL COMMITMENT

The city of San Diego and the State of California already have demonstrated their good faith commitment to their share of this project. They have invested \$14 million and have begun work to widen the existing road from four to six lanes of traffic. However, due to the increasingly heavy flow of trans-border commercial traffic, this road will be at—or above—capacity when completed. This is only a short-term solution, however, and a permanent answer to America's growing trade with Mexico is needed.

We have worked closely with the city and county of San Diego, the State Department of Transportation [CALTRANS], and the

local regional council of governments in identifying this as our county's top transportation need.

In addition, CALTRANS, the General Services Administration and the California Highway Patrol Department all concur on the vital need for completion of this highway to meet the pressing needs created by the substantial increase in trade transportation.

### TRADE FACILITATION

This is a necessary and vital road because the Otay Mesa crossing is the only commercial vehicle border crossing facility between the two largest cities on the United States-Mexico border. With the recent opening of a new border crossing facility at Otay Mesa, this point of entry handles the third highest value of commerce along the entire United States-Mexico border.

The recent Federal Highway Administration report to Congress estimated that, because of the adoption of NAFTA, the value of commercial goods crossing the border would increase by 208 percent by the year 2000—but only if additional infrastructure improvements are made. If we achieve this 208 percent growth—the estimated value of goods crossing this border would be \$18.8 billion annually.

The Otay Mesa border crossing facility can handle this increase in business. We simply need an additional incremental investment on the part of the Federal Government to put us in a position to take full advantage of future increases in trade.

The one road that leads from the interstate highway, to this border crossing cannot accommodate the increase in traffic. This link is a four-lane city street—Otay Mesa Road—which is already over capacity and which has been the location of a number of fatal vehicular accidents due to its congestion. This road was never intended to handle heavily loaded cargo trucks traveling at high speeds to and from the international border. We need a highway to take this commercial traffic inland.

Mr. Chairman, the Federal Government made the decision to process all international commercial traffic at the Otay Mesa border crossing. The Federal Government also made the decision to approve NAFTA—which will soon double the volume of our cross-border traffic. These two new federal trade policies have created the urgent need for this highway. Not funding this project would be the worst kind of unfunded mandate. The Federal Government must meet this responsibility—our local communities simply cannot.

### TRAFFIC AND SAFETY

As I have mentioned, an overcrowded four lane city street—Otay Mesa Road—provides the only connection between the Otay Mesa point of entry and the interstate highway system. This road, which has the appearance of a country road, was not intended to carry a high volume of automobile traffic and certainly never a high volume of heavy commercial vehicles.

With the closing of the nearby San Ysidro border crossing to commercial traffic, an additional 1,200 trucks per day carrying commercial goods to and from Mexico now travel on this city street. While the average mix of commercial trucks on any city street is 5 percent, this road experiences a 20 to 25 percent truck mix during regular business hours. Wear and tear on this road is occurring at an alarming rate due to these heavy loads.

When major traffic accidents occur on this road—as they do with increasing frequency now—all border traffic slows to a stop. It is typically 4 hours and occasionally more before accidents are cleared away and traffic returns to normal. This constitutes a major

impediment to the implementation of NAFTA.

This road also does not meet requirements for the transportation of hazardous materials through communities. With the closing of the San Ysidro crossing to commercial traffic, trucks carrying hazardous materials must travel to the Calexico-Mexicali point of entry to cross the border—a 90-mile detour!

### COST

We are asking that the Federal Government help San Diego accommodate this increasing international trade by approving a three-year project to build State Route 905, which would link the Otay Mesa border crossing with the interstate highway system, and to make the necessary street improvements to manage this commercial traffic that is so vital to our economic growth.

While the total cost for the 3-year project is \$96.7 million, our request for fiscal year 1996 is \$500,000. These funds would allow for the completion of necessary environmental and cultural reports on the proposed route of the new highway. These studies are important and invaluable as they will influence the highway's alignment and potentially reduce expensive mitigation costs in the future. Funding for these studies is critical for this project to move forward.

### CONCLUSION

It is a Federal responsibility to connect ports of entry with the interstate highway system. The Federal Government has not met its obligations. The State of California and the city of San Diego have invested more than \$14 million in interim remedies. The private sector has invested far more than that to finance the necessary local street network. Existing State and Federal funds are being used to improve two existing highways, Interstates 5 and 15. These two highways would carry NAFTA-related traffic from the new highway to destinations throughout the county and beyond.

San Diego County's transportation and infrastructure needs are many. I hope that this committee will agree that the relatively small Federal investment required for this critical portion of border infrastructure, State Route 905, is in the national interest and that you will include funding for this road in our fiscal year 96 budget.

## AMERICAN HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR HUGO PRINCZ

**HON. CHARLES E. SCHUMER**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 23, 1995*

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring your attention and that of my colleagues to the case of Hugo Princz. Mr. Princz is the only known America survivor of the Nazi death camps. He has been denied Holocaust reparations by Germany for 40 years because of his U.S. citizenship while in the camps, despite numerous diplomatic entreaties on his behalf by successive administrations and Congress.

During the 103d Congress, the House and Senate unanimous resolutions supporting Mr. Princz and took numerous other steps on his behalf, including unanimous passage last October in the House, and near passage in the Senate, of legislation I authored which would have permitted the lawsuit he filed against Germany in 1992 to proceed; the courts had found Germany immune from the suit. My colleagues and I are prepared to reintroduce that